

Communist China

Preview

- Main Idea / Reading Focus
- Communists Take Over China
- Faces of History: Mao Zedong
- China under Mao
- China After Mao

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Communist China

Main Idea

China has undergone many changes since becoming a Communist nation in 1949. today, after making many market reforms, China has a rapidly growing economy.

Reading Focus

- How did the Communists take over China?
- What were the main events that took place in China under Mao's leadership?
- How did China change in the years after Mao's death?

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Communists Take Over China

During World War II the Chinese Communists and the nationalist Guomindang put aside differences to fight Japanese invaders.

Civil War Resumes

- Once Japan defeated, civil war resumed
- Guomindang forces outnumbered Mao's Communists, but Communists had wide support among China's peasants
- Rural Chinese peasants had long been oppressed by brutal landlords, high taxes, policies of Jiang Jieshi's corrupt government

Public Support

- Communists promised to take land from landlords, distribute to peasants
- By 1949, Communists had driven Guomindang almost entirely from China
- Guomindang control limited to small areas on mainland, several islands, including Taiwan

Communists Take Over China

People's Republic of China

- October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong stood before huge crowd in Beijing
- Announced formation of People's Republic of China
- Mao's strategy of guerrilla warfare in rural China

Opposition to Mao

- China faced many difficulties, including crippled economy, lack of functional government
- Some countries opposed to communism refused to recognize Mao
- Claimed Jiang's government on Taiwan was true Chinese government

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FACES OF HISTORY

**MAO
Zedong**

1893–1976



As a teenager, Mao Zedong was forced to work full-time on his family's farm. Rebelling against his parents, Mao left home to continue

his education and by 1918 was working as a librarian's assistant at Beijing University, where he was first introduced to Marxist theory.

Mao joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and soon after realized the potential power of China's rural peasants. Mao believed that, unlike the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, which depended on urban workers, China's hundreds of millions of peasants would be the revolutionaries. It was Mao's strategy of guerrilla warfare in rural China that would eventually lead to Communist victory.

Summarize How did Mao believe that China differed from Russia?

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Summarize

Why did peasants support the Communist takeover of China?

Answer(s): because the Communists promised them land

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China under Mao

Having defeated the Guomindang, Mao set about building a Communist China. His first concern was rebuilding a country that had been torn apart by years of civil war.

Rebuilding China

- Communist ideology shaped new government
- Change in China's political, economic systems
- Government discouraged practice of religion

Development

- Also seized property of rural landowners, redistributed among peasants
- Put in place Soviet-style five-year plans for industrial development

First Plan

- 1957, first plan doubled China's small industrial output
- Early efforts to build economy successful
- Improved economy, reduced poverty

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Early Years

Improvements in literacy rates, public health

- **Chinese life expectancy increased sharply over next few decades**
- **Improvements came at a cost**
 - To consolidate Communist control over China, government soon began to eliminate so-called “enemies of the state” who had spoken out against government’s policies
 - Many thousands—including public officials, business leaders, artists, writers—killed, or sent to labor camps

China Modeled on Soviet Union

- Soviet Union provided financial support, aid in China's first years
- China modeled many of its new political, economic, military policies on Soviet system
- 1950s, territorial disputes, differences in ideology pushed China away from Soviet ally

The Great Leap Forward

- 1958, in break from Soviet-style economic planning, Mao announced program designed to increase China's industrial, agricultural output
- The **Great Leap Forward** created thousands of communes, collectively owned farms, of about 20,000 people each
- Each commune to produce food, have own small-scale industry

The Great Leap Forward

Planning Disaster

- Plan was disaster; small commune factories failed to produce quantity, quality of goods China needed
- Combination of poor weather, farmers' neglect led to sharp drops in agricultural production
- Famine spread through rural China; tens of millions starved to death between 1959 and 1961

China Virtually Isolated

- Failure of Great Leap Forward led to criticism of Mao
- Soviet criticism, withdrawal of Soviet industrial aid widened rift between two Communist nations
- By early 1960s, relations had broken down completely; China virtually isolated in world community

The Cultural Revolution

New Movement

- Mid-1960s, Mao tried to regain power, prestige lost after Great Leap Forward
- Initiated new movement called **Cultural Revolution**, sought to rid China of old ways, create society where peasants, physical labor were the ideal

Red Guards

- Campaign meant eliminating intellectuals who Mao feared wanted to end communism, bring back China's old ways
- Mao shut down schools, encouraged militant students, **Red Guards**, to carry out work of Cultural Revolution by criticizing intellectuals, values

Destruction of Society

- Mao lost control; Red guards murdered hundreds of thousands of people; by late 1960s, China on verge of civil war before Mao regained control
- Cultural Revolution reestablished Mao's dominance, caused terrible destruction; civil authority collapsed, economic activity fell off sharply

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Analyze

How did life in China change under Mao?

Answer(s): The failure of the Great Leap Forward and the isolation of China triggered the Cultural Revolution.

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China After Mao

Reforms Begin

- 1976, Mao died; his death followed by retreat from many of his policies
- China began to end isolation from rest of world in early 1970s
- 1972, U.S. President Richard Nixon visited China, meeting with Mao
- During last years of Mao's life, much power wielded by group of four people known as **Gang of Four**

Gang of Four

- Gang of four included Mao's wife, Jiang Qing—responsible for some of worst features of Cultural Revolution
- After Mao's death, more moderate leaders imprisoned Gang of Four

Four Modernizations

- **Deng Xiaoping** eventually became China's leader, helped put in place far-reaching market reforms
- Deng's reform plan, Four Modernizations, sought to modernize: agriculture, industry, science and technology, defense

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Tiananmen Square

More Freedoms

- Inspired by movement toward economic freedom
- Chinese demanded more political freedom

Pro-Democracy Protestors

- Spring 1989, democratic reforms in Eastern Europe
- One million pro-democracy protestors occupied Beijing's Tiananmen Square

Leaders Impatient

- China's leaders repeatedly asked protestors to leave square
- Protestors remained, met with force

Freedom Had Not Arrived

- June 1989, tanks, troops moved into square
- Killed protestors in **Tiananmen Square Massacre**

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China Today

China's economy has grown rapidly as market reforms have continued. Today, China's economy is the second largest in the world, behind only the United States. As the economy has improved, so has the standard of living for many Chinese.

Economic Development

- Economic growth has not reached all China's 1.3 billion people
- To prevent further population growth, Chinese government encourages families to have only one child

Other Challenges

- Large population, rapidly expanding industries
- High demands on resources, environment
- Imports coal, iron ore, oil, natural gas to meet energy needs

This has caused shortages and higher costs for these resources on the global market, as well as air and water pollution within China.

Human Rights Issues

Human rights abuses another concern for critics of China

- Chinese government continues to limit free speech, religious freedoms
- Exercises strict control over the media
- Political protestors can be jailed
- Nation's courts accused of failing to provide fair trials
- Critics increased calls for reforms after Beijing chosen to host 2008 Olympic Games

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Make Generalizations

How did China change in the years after Mao's death?

Answer(s): isolation lessened, more moderate leaders took power; new economic freedom led to call for political freedom, improved standard of living

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